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The principle of military necessity is, like the related principle of **proportionality** ^[1], an essential component of international humanitarian law.

The “principle of military necessity” permits measures which are actually necessary to accomplish a legitimate military purpose and are not otherwise prohibited by international humanitarian law. In the case of an armed conflict the only legitimate military purpose is to weaken the military capacity of the other parties to the conflict.

Military necessity generally runs counter to humanitarian exigencies. Consequently the purpose of humanitarian law is to strike a balance between military necessity and humanitarian exigencies.

See also **Military objectives** ^[2]; **Military Advantage** ^[3]; **Fundamental Principles of IHL** ^[4]; **Humanity** ^[5];

OUTLINE

Chapter 9, II. 4. Definition of military objectives ^[6]

CASES

ILC, Draft Articles on State responsibility ^[7]

US/UK, Report on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf War ^[8]

US, Surrendering in the Persian Gulf War ^[9]

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Israel, Blockade of Gaza and the Flotilla Incident ^[11]

Autonomous Weapon Systems ^[12]

ICRC, International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts in 2015 ^[13] (Para. 56 ^[14], 143 ^[15], 177 ^[16])

Israel/Palestine, Accountability for the Use of Lethal Force ^[17]

International Criminal Court, Trial Judgment in the Case of the Prosecutor V. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo ^[18]

ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Prli? et al. ^[19]

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